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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN (OMARA), PM/ISO, INR, INL/AE (ALTON AND CARROLL)

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NEW HEAD OF MVD ANTI-NARCOTICS AGENCY IN KAZAKHSTAN

¶1. Summary: Major-General Maratkali Ordabayevich Nukenov has been appointed the Head of the Kazakhstani Committee on Combating Drug Trafficking and Controlling Circulation of Narcotics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The new Chairman replaces 49 year-old Major-General Anatoliy Vyborov, who submitted his resignation to the Minister of Internal Affairs on March 16. End summary.

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NEW "DRUG TSAR"  
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¶2. According to Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency, Maratkali Nukenov was appointed chairman of the Committee on Combating Drug Trafficking and Controlling Circulation of Narcotics on March 21, 2007, by Minister of Internal Affairs Baurzhan Mukhamedzhanov. Since 2003, Nukenov worked as the Head of the Department of Internal Affairs of Aktyubinskaya oblast (Western Kazakhstan). In previous years Nukenov worked in different positions at the Department of Internal Affairs of Almaty region and was the Deputy of the Committee for National Security. In 1978 he obtained his degree in law at Karaganda Higher School of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

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INITIAL IMPRESSIONS: POSITIVE  
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¶3. On March 26, EmbOffs met with the new chairman to discuss future plans for implementation of the INL project on strengthening internal anti-narcotics "Rubezh" checkpoints located on north-south traffic arteries in Kazakhstan. Nukenov expressed continued support for the Rubezh project and said he looked forward to continued collaboration with the INL office.

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VYBOROV'S RESIGNATION AND HIS FUTURE  
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¶4. Major-General of the police Anatoliy Nikolaevich Vyborov, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) since 1979, was appointed Vice-Minister and Chairman of the Committee on Combating Drugs in April 2004. Vyborov lost the vice minister position in March 2006. In a March 27 interview with the "Vremya" newspaper, Vyborov said that following his resignation as chairman of the committee, he would remain on the rolls of the MVD and retain his rank, privileges and seniority.

¶5. Although the GOK has not made an official announcement, the same Vremya article speculated that Vyborov will head the Central Asian

Regional Coordination and Information Center (CARICC) located in Almaty. Vyborov told EmbOff that the speculation about his appointment is a bit premature (although he did not disguise his interest in the position) because the agreement to establish CARICC has only been signed by five of seven member states and is awaiting signatures of the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan. (Note: According to the founding documents of CARRIC, the Director will be chosen by agreement of all participating countries once the remaining two countries sign the agreement. End note.) Once operational, the Center will be a regional body that will coordinate joint anti-narcotics operations by member states, analyze criminal developments in Central Asia, and promote information exchange between member-states.

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COMMENT  
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¶6. While post found Vyborov to be an excellent interlocutor and will regret his departure, initial impressions of Nukenov are favorable. Based on the initial meeting he appears to be a serious, action-oriented individual.

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